

AERIAL EXPLOITS

And the Fatalities of Ballooning
Recalled by The Globe.

UP IN A BALLOON STILL RISKY

Business, but Getting Comparatively Safe
Except Among the Professionals, Who Exhibit for Gain and Fool with Their Lives on Parachutes and Trapeze Bars—The Riverside Exhibit and Woman's Nerve.

The exploits of the female aeronaut at Riverside, which have marked the progress of aerial navigation. America has had some chapters of this kind in its history, but for the most part they have had to do with professional aeronauts who made balloon ascensions for exhibition. The scientific aeronaut has flourished principally in Europe, and some notable instances of fatal ascensions among his class are of record. Graphic accounts of some of these follow, having been taken from foreign publications, and made up from an article written by Malcolm Spencer, of the Aeronautical Society of London.

It was a bright day in July; the morning was yet early, but thousands of persons were waiting their way to the famous Vauxhall Gardens in London. Gossips were busy with their tongues, something great was on the tapis to produce so much excitement, and well before 8 o'clock the vast gardens were thronged with an eager expectant crowd.

In the middle of the grounds the bulk of a huge balloon swayed gracefully from side to side, and here was the center of excitement, for it was known that one daring man, Robert Cocking by name, was about to attempt something never before achieved—no less, in fact, than to descend from the clouds by means of a parachute.

A hoarse cry rose on the air as at a given signal the ropes were severed and the huge balloon soared toward the firmament. The car was occupied by Mr. Green and a fellow aeronaut, and the spectators below perceived that Cocking, the intrepid parachutist, was suspended by a smaller basket beneath, with his parachute beside him. Up and up the monstrous balloon sailed, swaying from side to side and moving with the summer breeze in a westerly direction. Thousands of people, aware of Cocking's advertised attempt, had assembled in various parts of London to watch the descent. To these the balloon looked but a tiny speck, and the car and its occupants were almost invisible. Now the levitation of the air was over Kennington Common. Up in the clouds all was silent; but at length Mr. Green heard Cocking's voice.

"How high are we, Mr. Green?"

"About 1,000 feet."

"Good! let me know when we are 1,500 feet and then every 500 until we reach 5,000 feet. That's the height from which I will descend."

At length the fatal words, "Five thousand feet," were announced. "Let go!" cried Cocking, and Mr. Green severed the ropes which kept the parachutist fast to the car. Down below the spectators were craning their necks. They saw the balloon shoot suddenly upward, and a tiny speck come hurtling down with terrible rapidity. They knew it was Cocking, and a thrill ran through every nerve. Curiosity gave way to horror, and as the unfortunate man came into plainer view it was seen that his parachute instead of being inflated had collapsed and folded around his body. Nearer and nearer, thundering to earth, came the doomed man. Nothing could save him, and strong men shuddered and women fainted. Then all was over. Smashed to a jelly, poor Cocking was the victim of his own intrepidity, lay dead on the stoops of the street.

The scene changes to sunlit Naples in Italy. Crowds of people were gathered in the grounds of the hall of Hygiene to witness the ascent of the monster balloon Napoli. Captain Vanni, of the Italian army, was to manage the balloon, and he was to be accompanied by Count Montecupo and Signor Pelizzo.

Shouts of admiration arose as the balloon gracefully soared into the air, trending silently westward toward the open sea. The aeronauts, all amateurs, were enchanted at the views they obtained from their height. Over the bay, and seemed to be oblivious of the fact that they would soon be over the waters of the great Mediterranean. It was not until the coast was reached that they thoroughly realized their position and decided upon a descent. It was then that a sudden gust of wind caught the balloon and carried it out to sea. They had no life belts, and the bay of Naples was destitute of craft. Night was coming on, and already they were invisible to those on shore.

The valve line was pulled, and the balloon sank gradually. By some miraculous means they hoped to descend on the island of Capri, toward which they were drifting. It was their only hope; if they missed Capri there was nothing but the sea below them. The balloon would not keep on going indefinitely. As the balloon descended different currents of air were encountered, and the balloon drifted this way and that, until at last the car was only a few feet from the water. Then, suddenly, the balloon dipped, the car was under water, and the voyagers were up to their necks. With cries of dismay they scrambled into the ropes and hung on for dear life.

Down, and down, and down. The ponderous silken bag now rested on the waves, and rolled over and over as the wind caught it. Night had come on and the situation of the three men was desperate. They clung huddled into the netting, but with the rolling of the balloon they were frequently under water. How long would the gas last? That was the great momentous question. When the balloon collapsed, nothing but a miserable death awaited them. Three hours were passed in agony. They saw the lights of the Palermo mull boat steaming along the horizon, but shout as loud as they might their voices could not attract attention, and meanwhile the balloon was getting lower and lower in the water. Suddenly there was a great lurching roll; all three men were hurled into the water and sank. Count Montecupo had tied himself to a part of the netting, and half drowned managed once again to reach the silken fabric. Painfully he dragged himself into the netting. He looked around for his companions. They had disappeared. He heard their mournful heart-breaking cries for help as they battled with the remorseless sea. Then all was silent.

Morning dawned, and the occupants of a fishing smack observed a strange object lying flat on the surface of the water. They sailed toward it and found that it was all that remained of the balloon Napoli and in the meshes of the netting the insensible body of Count Montecupo. They took him off, and eventually he was landed, and so he lived to tell the exciting story of that night on the waters of the Mediterranean.

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It was Sunday morning in the pleasant city of Bordeaux, France. For some days previously the inhabitants of the city had been excited over the announcement that an Englishman, Lieutenant Gale, would on this particular Sunday make a sensational balloon ascent. The novelty of the entertainment consisted in the fact that Lieutenant Gale would dispense with the usual car and would ascend seated on the back of a pony.

Thousands of excitement loving Frenchmen and Frenchwomen assembled hours before the time fixed for the ascent, at the Hippodrome Vincennes. Everything was favorable for the event. The balloon, known as the Royal Cremorne, was filled with gas, and when Lieutenant Gale appeared, accompanied by the pony, cheers rang out far and near.

At last all was ready. The pony was securely lashed to the ropes attached to the netting, and Mr. Gale took his place on its back. The stentorian order to let go was uttered, and up shot the balloon. Gale was seen seated gracefully on the animal, the bridle in one hand, while he saluted the spectators with the other. A shudder of fear went through the crowd as the pony made an effort as if to free itself, but its rider was perfectly calm and collected. Slowly the balloon sailed away, and some distance from Bordeaux it was observed to be descending. Skillful aeronaut as he was, Gale brought the balloon safely to the ground, where it was held by over a hundred peasants by whom it was eventually secured to a tree.

The pony was loosened, and then a terrible thing happened. Relieved of the weight of the animal, the balloon made an upward dart. Gale was hanging on to one of the ropes and before the peasants could lay hands on the netting the grapple attached to the car was dragged out and the unfortunate aeronaut was whirled aloft, hanging with both hands to the frail rope. The horrified onlookers could do nothing. They saw the whirling figure of the balloonist as he made frantic efforts to climb up the rope. They saw him spin this way and that, and, spell-bound, they watched for that critical moment when nature must give out and the wretched man must come tumbling down to his doom.

The balloon reached a height of over 2,000 feet and swept along for a distance of two miles. What must have been the agony of the doomed man dandling from that rope? What thoughts must have coursed through his brain as his arms seemed slowly but all too surely drawn from their sockets? It seemed hours that he hung there, but it was only a few minutes. Bit by bit the rope slipped through his fingers. He could hold on no longer. A last shriek of despair, and he feels himself hurled down, down to his death. His mangled body was not discovered for some days afterward, and when it was the spectators were horrified at the terrible nature of the injuries received.

We return now to our own continent, and find the City of Mexico agog with excitement. It is announced that the American parachutist, Professor Carter, is to make a descent from the clouds. On that day his car arrived from the States, and unfortunately his tried and trusty attendants are not with him. Knowing the risky nature of his business, he is reluctant to rely on local aid to get the balloon and the other apparatus ready, and proposes a postponement. The management, however, will hear nothing of it. The excited Mexicans would wreck the place if the promised entertainment did not come off. With many misgivings, therefore, Carter sets to work to get the balloon ready.

Carter's preparations are hurried in the extreme, and he is glad at length when the balloon is filled and held down by hundreds of willing hands. He takes his seat on the trapeze bar, for he has no basket, and looks up to see that the parachute, by which he is to descend, is in its place. Then he gives the signal to let go, and with a bound he starts on his upward journey. He contemplates presently to go through his performance, which consists of some trapeze acts, and as soon as these are completed he prepares for his great dive from the clouds. First of all he carefully examines the parachute, and his heart grows cold within him when he sees that some one has detached the thin cord which should have held the top of the parachute to the netting of the balloon. What to do at the moment he cannot decide. The balloon is already gaining higher and higher. If he cuts away the other ropes of the parachute it will collapse underneath him, and he will fall into it instead of its spreading out above him.

But something must be done, otherwise he will risk the balloon collapsing and so enveloping him that escape would be impossible. His mind is soon made up. He will throw himself from the bar, hoping that by making a good spring he may clear the overhanging folds of the parachute. He falls clear of the folds, and for some distance drops like a plummet. The earth is rushing up to him with lightning-like rapidity. Will the parachute never open? All seems lost, when of a sudden the horrible fall is arrested, and with a great crack the parachute opens.

Carter gazes aloft. The parachute is open it is true, but only partially so. Then he notices a rent that is getting gradually bigger and bigger, while several of the ropes are entangled. Although his headlong fall has in some measure been stopped, he knows that unless the ropes can be disentangled he will probably be dashed to pieces. He shakes his ropes, but too late. The earth rushes up toward him. His body strikes it with a great thud and rebounds nearly six feet. People rush toward him from all directions. It is impossible that he can live they all declare.

But live he does, though it is by a miracle. His spine is broken, all his ribs on one side, both thighs, both arms and collar bone are fractured, yet Carter lives, a wreck of his former self, and for years an example of the greed of the populace for life-risking entertainments.

Notwithstanding the mishap to Santos-Dumont's flying machine, it is believed that the inventor has solved the problem of aerial navigation. If this should prove to be the case, the importance of the fact can hardly be overestimated. A Washington letter says: "The dirigible balloon will revolutionize warfare. That is the statement made in a special bulletin which the War Department is about to publish. The facts summed up in the statement have been gathered from all parts of the world, and give a comprehensive idea of what the various civilized nations have achieved up to date in this line of experimentation. If the steerable balloon is not already

an accomplished fact, it is pretty nearly such.

The fate of Donaldson and a reporter for a Chicago newspaper who ascended some years ago to cross Lake Michigan has never been definitely determined, other of course, than that both men were killed. But The Globe has a distinct recollection that their bodies never were found. It is supposed that instead of being drowned in the lake the balloon collapsed or descended in some impenetrable forest, and that the men were either instantly killed by the collapse or were unable to navigate their way out of the forest and miserably perished of starvation. Ballooning under the recent stimulus of various governments is getting to be a comparatively safe profession, because of the many improvements in the machines used, but the professional aeronaut has still a very risky profession, especially the parachute and trapeze performance indulged in. That a woman musters up nerve enough, like the Riverside exhibitor, to accomplish these daring feats establishes the fact, to our mind, of the equality of the sexes, at least when it comes to a show-down of genuine nerve.

"BUG" FINKELSTEIN

Reaches His Native Soil and Sends Greeting to Dr. Richardson et al.

Cleveland, O., Aug. 1, 1901.

EDITOR OF THE GLOBE: Having spent my summer at the Hotel de St. Elizabeth, and desiring to benefit not only the guests there, but also the people of the District of Columbia, I desire to make a few suggestions.

If the well known expert on insanity, Dr. A. B. Richardson, would inspect the patients as he does the buildings, he would find plenty of room for the lunatics that come to the city of Washington, and also would have plenty of room for some of the idiots that are in Washington, and when a man is examined, do not look at his eye, to see how his mental faculties are. Mush and prunes are very delicious when served with something else, but a man can not live on lemonade and fireworks, hot and cold water. Dr. Richardson's opinion concerning the eye is oblong, might be the truth, but my opinion is his salary is overlong for the services he performs as an expert upon a person's mental faculties. The man has never lived yet on this earth, or even will live, that can tell and see what is in a man or woman's head. And physicians who think they can tell are like mind-readers.

I used to tip on the horses, but I got a good tip for such fools as are employed at that institution. They might make out a living around Swampoodle and Anacostia, but they better stay away from the big cities, for in all probabilities they would starve to death.

If Dr. Richardson only knew how much money I was going to sue for for illegal imprisonment, and which I will positively secure when I get a hearing from the cabinet, he would wish he had made my acquaintance in Cleveland, in 1887.

The government would get value received if they would give such attendants as Mr. Pixler and Mr. Taylor a position fishing with no salary attached, but that they could have half they caught.

And such detectives as Michael Madden, who think they will get a gold badge for arresting murdering maniacs who never was insane, and who never threatened a man or woman in his life. I might some day employ some of those detectives there, but it would not be to catch thieves; it would be to catch suckers in the Potomac.

Hoping I haven't offended any one, as I desire to return to Washington at an early date, and when I have finished my duties and obeyed my orders, probably the fool who was born in Ohio will be an invited guest at the White House.

By publishing the same you will oblige. Yours respectfully, HARRY FINKELSTEIN.

Say, you, smoke Carolina Brights.

AN EXTRACT

From a Private Letter from Havana to a Distinguished Citizen.

The Globe has found its way to Havana, and I know of no place that needs a "Globe" more than Cuba. There is a fine field here for a paper that calls names and sells the truth about those who are dressed with a little brief authority. It is true that it would run the risk of a libel suit or perhaps get a punch in the ribs with a sword cane, but a live newspaper man would never mind little things like that.

The Globe seems familiar with Ohio matters, and apparently has some knowledge of the G. P. O., so I would be glad to have some information on the Neely case. A few people down here have a recollection of the circumstances, but can't tell what has been done, what will be, or when. We have the assurance that Mr. Neely is sojourning in one of the government houses, but as to his condition, or the state of his case, copies on the docket, we are entirely in the dark. When the case is mentioned some people are mean enough to intimate that the case is delayed for fear of compromising some high officials at Washington. A New York paper stated when Neely was brought here, he would not be tried, and this same paper asserted that such orders had been issued by a statesman high in official life. Will the Globe enlighten us on this subject?

(Marcus A. Hanna has decided the matter long ago. Neither Neely nor Rathbone nor Perry Heath will ever appear in the dock nor Machen either, while Mr. Hanna lives around the government at Washington is his obedient servant. In Ohio this fall there will be some discussion of this matter, and The Globe hopes to be able to contribute to the gayety of the campaign—Ed Globe.)

Carolina Brights are winners.

A Tax-Payer's Complaint.

Washington, D. C., July 29, 1901. To EDITOR OF THE SUNDAY GLOBE: Sir: Seeing from the articles in several editions of your paper the government's attitude in regard to the Health Department only requiring some people to put their property in a sanitary condition, I call your attention to two cases in the Southeast.

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